# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 June 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Akram (Pakistan)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 740th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have a long list of speakers for today. They are the representatives of Australia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Belarus, Ukraine, India, Malaysia, Italy, Austria, Ireland, Greece, Morocco, Cuba, New Zealand, Denmark, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, Nigeria, Bangladesh, China, Portugal, Norway and Chile. I give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): I have to say that, when we supported expansion of the Conference on Disarmament, we did not know it would be at the cost of almost pushing Australia out of the room. But, if you look into the far distance, you will find me down at the end. It is almost a zero-sum game. They bring in New Zealand in one corner and push Australia out at the other. But, be that as it may, I did ask for the floor this morning to welcome warmly the historic expansion in the membership of the Conference on Disarmament we agreed to on Monday. Australia has been a firm and principled supporter of expansion from the outset. As a delegation, we are pleased that my predecessor, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan, as the Conference's Special Coordinator for membership in 1993, had the privilege of laying the foundation almost three years ago for this week's decision. He will be gratified to know that his work among us bears fruit.

But this decision has been a collective effort of impressive dimensions. Mr. President, I would like to place on record my delegation's appreciation for your careful and sensitive management of the complex modalities of our decision-making process. My delegation is also deeply appreciative of the tireless efforts over the last few years of many of your predecessors and of the creativity and energy imparted to our endeavour by the sustained commitment of a number of delegations.

I would also like to commend the persistent interest and patience of the 23 countries named on the so-called O'Sullivan list while waiting to take their rightful places as members of the international community's sole disarmament negotiating body. These qualities, I might add, will fit them well for the challenges of membership of this Conference.

My delegation is confident that our Conference is now significantly better equipped to carry out its work and address its mandate in a dynamic and changing world. The expanded membership we now have is more representative of the post-cold-war environment in which we must steer out national courses for the common good. We are confident that the new members will contribute substantially to maintaining a relevant and focused thrust to our work.

Australia certainly does not see Monday's decision as the end of the road. Ambassador O'Sullivan, when presenting his recommendations for admission of the Group of 23 three years ago, specifically noted: "I would like to emphasize that this recommendation is part of a phased approach, since the extension of the composition of the Conference is a dynamic process." Australia continues to see Monday's long-delayed expansion of membership in this light.

(Mr. Starr, Australia)

Enrichment of our membership has occurred at an opportune and crucial time. We are fully immersed in the final days of our CTBT negotiations. It is fitting that our 23 new members - many of whom have played an active contributory role in the negotiations to date - should participate in the final drive as full members. It is also fitting for us, as the Conference, to have demonstrated at this critical time - when a negotiating effort lasting decades should finally come to fruition - that we can take decisive action. We have proven once in the last week that this Conference can rise to the challenges set it by the international community. As for CD expansion, let us, with the support of our new members, take action on the still more historic challenge of closing negotiations on the CTBT. Instead of focusing on problems, focus on solutions. Let us complete this task.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement, and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Slovakia, Ambassador Krásnohorská. You have the floor, Madame Ambassador.

Mrs. KRÁSNOHORSKÁ (Slovakia): It is a great honour to ask for the floor for the first time as a fully-fledged member of the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference and to extend to you our best wishes in this difficult job. I am fully confident that with your diplomatic skills and vast experience you will be fully able to discharge the responsibilities of the office. I can assure you of my delegation's full support. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, and the secretariat of the Conference for their valuable support.

I have asked for the floor today to address the three main issues which the CD has faced recently, namely the CTBT, the review of the agenda and expansion. The way in which the CD deals with these issues will, in our view, determine its future as the unique multilateral forum for negotiation of arms control and disarmament instruments.

Slovakia has always supported all the initiatives conducive to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the advances attained in the reduction of nuclear military potential since the NPT Review and Extension Conference, which gives a promise for gradual and complete nuclear disarmament. Using nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, Slovakia is ready to extend meaningful cooperation on the road towards elimination of the most devastating type of weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear tests are a relic of the cold war era that no longer have a place in the present world. Slovakia has therefore been a firm supporter of the nuclear-test-ban treaty. We believe that the CTBT will be an important contribution to international stability. The successful conclusion of these negotiations will contribute to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. On the other hand it will also curb the qualitative improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons. thereby strengthening in the long run the climate of international security.

(Mrs. Krásnohorská, Slovakia)

Simultaneously, the success of the CTBT negotiations will also enhance the prestige of the CD and generate further expectations in international public opinion.

The CD has reached the final stage of the negotiations for a comprehensive test ban. It has a little more than a week to complete the text of the treaty if it wants to meet its self-imposed deadline. At this stage, I should like to pay particular tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, the chairmen of the two working groups, Ambassador Zahran and Ambassador Berdennikov, as well as to the various Friends of the Chair and moderators.

The introduction of the Chairman's draft of a complete text of the comprehensive test-ban treaty at such a late stage of the negotiations was a courageous, but we believe a necessary, procedure. We also commend Ambassador Ramaker for the manner in which he has conducted the subsequent intensive open-ended consultations.

Please allow me to share with you some of our general views on this subject. Slovakia believes that the CTBT must be truly comprehensive - banning all types of nuclear explosive tests without distinction and for all time. It has to be effectively verifiable - the verification and inspection regime should contribute effectively to the credibility of the treaty on the one hand, and on the other hand it should not jeopardize legitimate security concerns of the States parties. Last but not least, the treaty must be of a universal character. We are concerned that a solution on the entry-into-force article has not been found so far which could command consensual support of all parties to the negotiations. We sincerely hope that delegations will work hard to find one in the remaining time. Slovakia favours a formula which will enable the treaty to enter into force without unnecessary delays and as soon as possible. We also think that the composition of the Executive Council of the future treaty organization is another element which needs an expedient solution. We consider that the Executive Council should be of an appropriate size, as too numerous a membership could diminish the Council's overall effectiveness.

The Slovak Republic believes that the nuclear test ban should not become an "end of history" but on the contrary it should serve as a catalyst for further nuclear disarmament. As the CTBT negotiations enter their final phase the issue of the CD agenda is gaining growing importance. We studied with interest the report submitted by Special Coordinator Ambassador Meghlaoui on the results of his consultations. From the report it is obvious that the opinions of delegations on this issue vary widely. Nevertheless, we hope that further consultations will define the areas on which progress could be made and build up an understanding on the issues on which negotiations should be commenced after the CTBT has been concluded.

For my country a "cut-off" convention would be the next logical stage in the work of the CD. Slovakia supports an early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in accordance with the mandate agreed in 1995. We are aware that there are still certain differences but we maintain that they should not prevent the CD from starting effective work on this subject.

(Mrs. Krásnohorská, Slovakia)

From the general point of view we believe that the agenda of the CD needs some modernization. We agree that the first part of item 2 of the agenda should be deleted and only the second part, namely "Nuclear disarmament", should be kept. At the same time we maintain that the future agenda should be balanced and deal with the issues of weapons of mass destruction as well as with conventional weapons. Slovakia considers the issue of conventional armaments as an important one and I am sure this point of view is shared by many delegations in this room. To complete the picture let me simply add that the issues of negative security assurances and outer space deserve adequate attention too.

More than three years have expired since Slovakia claimed the seat in the CD which had been vacated on the dissolution of the former Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, the CD failed to use that time to honour the bilateral agreement between the two successor States according to which it was Slovakia who was to fill in this seat. Slovakia has proved its readiness to seek compromise from the very beginning. In spite of the legitimacy of its claim Slovakia greed to follow any acceptable procedure. In the summer 1993 it was, in this way, included in a package of States candidates for CD membership which was considered the most balanced means of CD expansion. Slovakia accepted this procedure in spite of the fact that in its case it was not a question of expansion but the assumption of an existing seat on the basis of an agreement between two successors to a former member. Unfortunately again, because of well-know reasons, no consensus on expansion was achieved in the CD during the following two years.

At this stage, allow me to express our gratitude to all those who acknowledged Slovakia's special status and have steadily supported its legitimate claim for the seat vacated by the former Czechoslovakia. Their support was of great important to our young State.

In September 1995, Slovakia welcomed the decision contained in document CD/1356 as the first real step in the right direction. To contribute to the resolution of the issue we actively participated in the preparation of the package which allowed the CD to finally decide on the implementation of the expansion decision. We had hoped for a different solution, but the initiative proved to be a unique and balanced procedure by which the CD could overcome all differences.

The necessary political wisdom and readiness of all the members of the G-23 to temporarily give up one of the basic rights of a sovereign State paved the way to a compromise acceptable to all. Thanks to that, the CD has succeeded in adopting the overdue decision on expansion of its membership and finally increased it representativeness and legitimacy.

Allow me to use this opportunity to thank you and your predecessor Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria for your assistance in this regard and to congratulate the new members on the successful conclusion of the lengthy and painstaking process. It is also my duty to thank all those who participated in the preparation of the achievement, especially Ambassador Selebi and his delegation, who have put so much effort into the exercise.

(Mrs. Krásnohorská, Slovakia)

Slovakia believes, in principle, that a body which negotiates arms control and disarmament treaties that concern the security interests of all members of the international community must be representative. All countries which so wish should be admitted into it. We are therefore pleased to be a witness and participant in the achievement of a step towards this goal. The present composition of the CD better reflects the new international situation. We hope that the new members will bring fresh air and new dynamism to the CD. Slovakia is determined to spare no effort and contribute, according to its modest capabilities, to the success of present and future negotiations in this unique forum.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Slovakia for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Spain, Ambassador Morcillo.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): With your permission, Mr. President, the first words uttered by the delegation of Spain as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament will be to express to you our satisfaction and confidence at seeing you presiding over the work of the Conference at a crucial moment in its activities, when - as we hope and wish - it is approaching a new milestone on the international community's path towards the objective of general and complete disarmament. This satisfaction is based on your well-known experience, of which this delegation of Spain has firsthand knowledge and appreciation.

And perhaps it is not necessary for us to dwell on the confidence inspired by your leadership when the very reason for this first statement by my delegation is the undeniable success of the resolution on the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament that I would venture to term a historic decision. That decision was taken in a chamber imbued with history, the Council Chamber of the Palais des Nations, which bears the name of the Spanish founding father of international law, Father Francisco de Vitoria, and which was decorated by Spain as a gift to the League of Nations. But it is not that link with Spain, however significant it may be today to my delegation, that I wished to highlight. The murals that have witnessed the expansion of the Conference were inaugurated in October 1936, at an especially crucial time in the circumstances that preceded the Second World War, and the collapse of the entire system of international relations at the time. My delegation wanted to call attention to the historic nature of the Council Chamber because some of the most important decisions that led to the world crisis of 1939 were taken - or were not taken - in it. This Chamber was therefore witness to some of the errors that led to the collapse of the League of Nations. However, on this occasion, the Conference on Disarmament has addressed the realities of history and has once again entered the history books with a decision which my delegation views as encouraging because it has agreed to expand its membership, thereby opening its doors to a group of countries that had repeatedly affirmed their resolve to become involved in its work, striving to give it greater and broader representativeness. Now these doors that have opened cannot be closed again in disregard of the legitimate aspirations of another group of countries that have also affirmed their determination to participate fully in the work of the Conference. At this point my delegation

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

wishes to appeal to all member countries of the Conference to continue their efforts so that an appropriate and prompt reply is given to this question, in accordance with the provisions of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/72 C.

With the expansion, the Conference on Disarmament has taken an important step into the future in ensuring that it will continue to achieve its objectives as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament in the institutional framework of the United Nations. Today the step has been taken that was essential to bring the membership of this Conference into line with the realities that have arisen from a new international community and which are very different from those that prevailed when it was last remodelled. More than thanks for the decision adopted by the members of the Conference on Disarmament - though it cannot fail to offer them - my delegation wishes to express its gratitude, praise and appreciation for the political realism and historic wisdom of the decision that they have adopted. Nor would it have been right to make no reference to all those who in one way or another have contributed to the taking of this first step in the expansion of the Conference. We would not like to list them all, for fear of forgetting someone. But we do not wish to fail to mention Ambassador O'Sullivan of Australia, who was able to draw up a list of countries notable for its balance and representativeness; Ambassadors Lampreia of Brazil and Zahran of Egypt, for their work in seeking solutions to the issue, work later taken over by Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, who added a vital burst of energy; or Ambassador Selebi of South Africa, for the faith and tenacity with which he struggled to find the formula that finally opened the way. My delegation also wishes to call to mind the essential role performed by the delegations of New Zealand, Austria and Chile in their coordination efforts in the Group of 23 that succeeded in keeping an intrinsically heterogeneous group united.

The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament has taken place at a particularly timely moment when we are in the final stretch of its ongoing negotiations. This will enable the delegation of Spain to participate as a full member in the conclusion of the negotiations and the adoption of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, under which Spain is going to be involved in the verification system as a part of its primary network of seismological stations, and seeks to participate in the organization at a level and on a scale dictated by the political objectives of this agency and consonant with the technological capabilities of my country. This is perhaps not the right moment to enter into detailed examination of specific aspects of the treaty being negotiated, both those on which there is a convergence of positions and those where substantial differences remain. We do not think that this is advisable at the moment in our proceedings when my delegation is entering the negotiations. But we do consider that it is necessary to refer once again to the major political framework within which my delegation has been following the negotiations in its previous capacity as an observer. This framework has been based on two basic principles: the need to arrive at a total ban on nuclear tests through an appropriate formulation of what has been called the "zero option", and the requirement that a legal framework must be created which will enable such an objective to be reached as soon as possible, through rapid entry into force and the early establishment of the organization

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

that is to enforce it. My delegation believes that such basic principles are essential and that therefore any development of the rules of the treaty that ran counter to them would be a backward step that would be difficult to understand and accept. In so far as such principles seem to serve as a clear guide for the action of many delegations, all that remains for us is to reiterate the delegation of Spain's full support for the efforts being made by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Ramaker, to give an effective boost to the work of the Conference.

My delegation is perfectly well aware that the objectives that may take shape in any political activity have no value if they are not tempered by the necessary dose of prudence and realism. No useful purpose is served in building a theoretically desirable building if it is not viable because it is not accepted by those who have to live in it. The success of any negotiations lies not in imposing the points of view of the strongest or the most skilful, but in securing agreements that can work because they respond to specific requirements and interests. Thus the application to current circumstances of the major political principles which should underlie the present negotiations defines the boundaries of the Conference's action at the present time. For my delegation there are three issues that clearly emerge in relation to the hair-splitting or excessive detail that is holding up the praiseworthy work now being guided by the moderators, as the Friends of the Chair did earlier; in them lies the balance of the future treaty and its chances of becoming a reality. One of these issues is the placing of the treaty in the general process of development which international relations are currently undergoing. In this process, the treaty constitutes a concrete step in a particular direction rather than a general programme for future political action. Another issue is the need for the early entry into force of the treaty to guarantee that its objectives can be achieved, without the former being jeopardized by the inclusion of those whose presence appears essential. Finally, a third issue is that of ensuring that the future organization will have working arrangements which will truly guarantee its effectiveness through bodies and verification procedures that will be appropriate in both cases on account of their composition and their means of implementation.

In the ideas outlined above we have indicated what for my delegation is an absolute necessity and what it considers negotiable. It is true that the delegation of Spain is entering the current negotiations at a late stage. Therefore, the objective that is to be set is not so much to get involved in the details of the establishment of a legal framework, as to unite its efforts and its drive to the dynamic process which is to be commenced for its development. For this reason, the delegation of Spain is going to stress those operational aspects that are going to need sound and appropriate progress when the negotiations conclude. Many of them are currently being given their final touches; my delegation is going to devote major attention to specific subjects such as entry into force, the structure of the Executive Council and the operation of the verification system, because in them we see the nucleus of our future cooperation to enhance success in achieving the aims of the treaty which it seems is about to become a reality.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Uluçevik.

Mr. ULUÇEVIK (Turkey): Mr. President, at the very outset, I wish to pay tribute to you not only because this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, but also because this is the first occasion that I am addressing the Conference on Disarmament as the representative of one of its full members. I warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. I consider it an auspicious coincidence that Turkey becomes a member of the CD at a time when it is presided over by a distinguished representative of Pakistan, a country with which Turkey traditionally enjoys fraternal ties and relations. Your outstanding personal qualities, Mr. President, are well known to all of us. It was owing in great part to your wise leadership and diplomatic skills that three days ago the landmark decision on the expansion of the CD by 23 members could have been taken. We are most thankful to you. My delegation is confident that under your able guidance the ongoing negotiations on the CTBT will also be successfully concluded.

It goes without saying that whenever mention is made of the long and arduous process of expansion of the CD, the names of Ambassador O'Sullivan of Australia, Ambassador Zahran of Egypt and Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco will always be remembered with appreciation and gratitude. It was their vision, energy and unremitting efforts that paved the way for decision CD/1406. I should be remiss if I did not commend Ambassador Selebi of South Africa, Ambassador Berguño of Chile and Ambassador Sánchez Arnau of Argentina for their intense and dedicated efforts as well as for their imaginative diplomacy in bringing painstaking work on a subject that has bedevilled us for so long to a successful conclusion. They deserve our thanks and praise.

The decision on the expansion of the CD is, no doubt, to the credit of all its members, both old and new. Because decision CD/1406 represents the political will and ability of the CD to adapt itself, though somewhat belatedly, to the requirements of our rapidly changing world. It also represents the awareness of both the old and new members of the need to show flexibility and act with a spirit of compromise whenever the common interests of the international community so require. In my view, the decision on expansion heralds to the world at large the rejuvenation of the CD.

My delegation is aware of the fact that the compromise solution was aimed at circumventing the existing obstacles in the way of expansion and therefore it was not the ideal one. We knew that our choice was between the ideal and the feasible.

It was out of our desire to be in the position at the earliest possible time of playing our due role in the multilateral disarmament negotiating process that we finally opted for the arrangement that seemed to us the only feasible one at present. However, we are satisfied that decision CD/1406 is a clean one and puts all the 61 members on an equal footing in the negotiating process.

(Mr. Uluçevik, Turkey)

Turkey lies at the very epicentre of several regions making up the most turbulent part of the northern hemisphere. It is, therefore, engaged in the post-cold-war search for new approaches to build peace through multilateral action. Our objective is to reinforce the international security system in conformity with the principles and ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Turkey is firmly committed to the United Nations lofty goals of arms control and disarmament. Turkey today assumes its seat in the CD as a fully-fledged member with a sense of responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security as well as with its political will to actively contribute to the promotion of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. We firmly believe that the inclusion of 23 new members in the work of the CD will enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. In our view, expansion is also in keeping with the concept of universality.

We fervently hope that the turning-point achieved in the history of the CD by its expansion will in a week's time be complemented with a new and meaningful historic achievement in the form of the CTBT. We are confident that all members will be guided by the same spirit of compromise and flexibility that have led the work on expansion to a successful conclusion. We continue to believe that under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands, the ongoing efforts to yield a compromise package will be crowned with success. His working paper on a "draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty" offers us a chance for compromise.

Soon after the adoption of the text on the CTBT we shall be engaged in the planning for the future agenda of this Conference. In our view, following the conclusion of the work on the CTBT, the priority subject on our agenda should be an agreement banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. As to conventional arms control, transparency measures is an area which we think the CD should focus on.

Before concluding, I wish to thank once again those who have contributed to the expansion of the CD. I also wish to congratulate the new members and assure all delegations as well as the Secretary-General of this Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, his deputy Mr. Bensmail and their eminent staff of my personal cooperation together with that of the Turkish delegation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to Ambassador Sannikau, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

Mr. SANNIKAU (Belarus) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, it is with great satisfaction that I welcome you to the responsible post of President of the Conference and congratulate you on your extremely skilful and competent leadership of its work. We greatly appreciate the contribution you have made, as well as the contribution made by Ambassador Sánchez Arnau of Argentina, Ambassador Berguño of Chile and Ambassador Selebi of South Africa in finding a fair solution to the problem of the expansion of the membership of the Conference.

(Mr. Sannikau, Belarus)

I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations for the flexibility and spirit of cooperation which they have shown. I would like to express particular gratitude to our colleagues in the former Group of 23 for their partnership and mutual support.

For the delegation of the Republic of Belarus this is a historic moment because we are taking the floor for the first time in this prestigious international forum as fully-fledged member. As many here will recall, we have travelled a long and purposeful road to this event, passing via various approaches to the expansion formula which reflected the changing geopolitical situation. Belarus has become a fully-fledged member of the CD at a very crucial moment for it and for the international community - the period when we hope to complete the negotiations on the CTBT. In this connection I would like to share with you our views on the future treaty. Belarus would like to see in the treaty the concept of "true zero yield", that is to say the full and unconditional prohibition of any nuclear tests, including so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. This approach will be in keeping with the goals of non-proliferation and cessation of the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. It is vital for the treaty to have a truly reliable international verification regime, whose central technical elements will be the international monitoring system and the international data centre. On-site inspection, in our view, should be seen as an exceptional, infrequently applied measure with guarantees against possible misuse of the procedures for such inspections. The most acceptable formula for entry into force of the treaty, in our opinion, is its ratification by all States that have a nuclear capability (including nuclear power stations and nuclear research reactors) and appear in the appropriate IAEA list.

We consider that the most rational and acceptable approach would be for the future treaty organization to be located in Vienna and use the administrative and technical capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In particular, this will allow us to achieve significant savings in resources, which is very important for us. Belarus hopes that the CTBT negotiations will be successfully concluded in the very near future. We consider this treaty to be an important step towards the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament and the building of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Despite the obvious priority nature of the CTBT, we must not forget the other items on the agenda of the CD. We hope that following the conclusion of work on the CTBT the appropriate practical steps will be taken in the Conference to rapidly begin negotiations on a ban on the production of fissionable materials, security assurances for non-nuclear States, and nuclear disarmament in a broad context. All this will allow us to move forward consistently towards the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime for nuclear weapons. For Belarus this trend is one of the most important foreign policy priorities. That is due to the fact that we are personally experiencing the nuclear consequences of the largest man-made disaster of our time - Chernobyl. It is also dictated by the fact that from the very first days of its independent existence Belarus was obliged to take difficult decisions concerning the nuclear arsenal of the former USSR. The Republic assumed complex and costly obligations under treaties dealing with nuclear

(Mr. Sannikau, Belarus)

non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons, guided first and foremost by the interests of international security. Belarus made and continues to make a significant contribution to disarmament processes in other areas. It would seem appropriate to mention that despite the disproportionately complicated obligations stemming from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe at a time of serious economic difficulties, the Republic has essentially met its quota for reductions of conventional arms and equipment. Today we have an interest in making this treaty more effective and adapting it to the new conditions.

Arms control and disarmament are today the most important component parts of international politics, and in contrast to the times of the "cold war" have acquired a practical dimension. In this regard we consider it important to remain realistic and not to squander the present momentum. Regional efforts are being made in the sphere of security, arms control and disarmament. Experience accumulated at the regional level should be transferred to the global level. And here it is hard to overestimate the role of the Conference on Disarmament - the sole multilateral forum with a negotiating mandate. Belarus has a sincere interest in enhancing the authority of the CD and strengthening its role. During the short modern history of our State we have acquired significant though not always positive experience in the field of disarmament. We hope that it will prove useful both for us and for the other participants in the CD. I am convinced that the quantitative expansion of the Conference will also lead to an improvement in the quality of its work in today's world of complex problems in the field of international security. We are ready for constructive cooperation with all delegations and hope to make our own contribution to the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Gryshchenko.

Mr. GRYSHCHENKO (Ukraine): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on the exemplary discharge of your very important functions, which - alongside the tireless efforts made by some CD members, as well as by many of those who belonged then to the "Group of 23" - made possible the final resolution of the long-standing problem of CD expansion. We consider the decision taken by the CD on 17 June 1996 to be an important step towards strengthening the multilateral character of this negotiating forum, raising its efficiency and ensuring the true universality of agreements being elaborated within its framework. To achieve these goals the Ukrainian delegation is ready to cooperate with all other delegations in the most constructive way.

Ukraine enters the Conference on Disarmament as a full-fledged member with the reputation of a country whose tangible contribution to the cause of arms control and nuclear disarmament is widely recognized by the international community. It is quite symbolic that assumption of CD membership by Ukraine closely coincided in time with the completion of the withdrawal from its

(Mr. Gryshchenko, Ukraine)

territory of nuclear warheads to be eliminated under the supervision of Ukrainian observers. Thus, Ukraine has in practice realized its decision to acquire the status of a non-nuclear-weapon State.

From the very first days of its reinstated independence, Ukraine sees a responsible and predictable arms control policy as a foreign policy priority which corresponds to both our national security concerns and the interests of the international community at large.

Having inherited from the former USSR the third largest nuclear potential in the world and one of the largest armed forces in Europe, Ukraine is being confronted with an arduous task of carrying out, within a limited time-frame, large-scale reductions of nuclear and conventional armaments in order to meet obligations in accordance with a number of multilateral and bilateral treaties (START, ABM, INF CFE, NPT). The ensuing financial and other costs have put an additional burden on our national economy, which is undergoing extremely painful transformation. In spite of these difficulties, Ukraine has been strictly adhering to its international obligations, thus proving its reputation as a resourceful and reliable partner at arms control negotiations, including in the CD.

The noticeable increase in the number of countries willing to take part in the work of the CD is indicative of the prominent place occupied by issues related to global and regional security in the modern world, as well as of the growing role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in this field. We hope that the assumption of CD membership by the former "Group of 23" States would mark a new stage in its history providing the CD with ample opportunities to realize in full its potential and giving a powerful new impetus to its activities. At the same time it paves the way for other applicant countries to be accepted in the CD as its new members.

The expansion of the CD has opened up new prospects for the development of multilateral cooperation aimed at strengthening global security and international stability. We believe that it would be instrumental not only for the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, but for facilitating its early entry into force as well.

Attaching the utmost importance to different aspects of nuclear disarmament, we think, however, that in the post-CTBT period the Conference - together with the urgent re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on the ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices - should resume serious consideration of such important matters as security assurances to non-nuclear States, conventional arms control, transparency and confidence-building measures, as well as the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Finally, I would like to stress that Ukraine is fully conscious of its new responsibilities as a member of the Conference on Disarmament. We are ready to assume them in order to actively promote the search for solution of the pressing problems pertaining to strengthening global peace and security.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Mr. President, allow me to extend to you my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We are pleased to see a representative of a country belonging to the G-21 preside over the Conference at a time when the Conference is faced with issues of great importance. We have recognized and are aware that the Conference will benefit greatly at this time from your wisdom, experience and well-known diplomatic skills. May I also convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria, for the dedication and skill with which he guided our work through his presidency? I would like to welcome Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia, whose presence in our midst has already enriched our discussions. This is also an opportunity to warmly welcome the 23 new members of the Conference on Disarmament who have joined us, albeit in a rather unorthodox manner, this week.

We have reached a critical point in the negotiations on the CTBT. Since January 1994, when the Conference on Disarmament adopted a mandate to negotiate a CTBT "which would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security", India has participated actively and constructively in the negotiations. We have put forward a number of proposals, consistent with the mandate adopted by the CD. These proposals are aimed at ensuring that the CTBT must be a truly comprehensive treaty, that is, a treaty which bans all nuclear testing without leaving any loopholes that would permit nuclear-weapon States to continue refining and developing their nuclear arsenals at their test sites and in their laboratories. Through these proposals we have underscored the importance of placing the CTBT in a disarmament framework, as part of a step-by-step process aimed at achieving the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

Despite all our efforts, however, we have no choice today but to express our disappointment with the way the negotiations have developed. At this late stage, we are obliged to conclude that the basic prohibitions, as drafted so far, which define the scope remain very narrow and do not fulfil the mandated requirement of a comprehensive ban. This approach would give us only a "nuclear-weapon-test-explosion-ban treaty" and not a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are equally, if not more, concerned that any attempt to introduce substantive disarmament provisions in the treaty have been blocked by some delegations. Weak and woefully inadequate preambular references to nuclear disarmament such as those contained in working paper CD/NTB/WP.330 cannot meet our concerns. We are only too aware that non-binding references in other treaties have been treated with complete disregard. How can we escape the conclusion that the nuclear-weapon States are determined to continue to rely on nuclear weapons for their security and visualize the CTBT not as a serious disarmament measure but merely as an instrument against horizontal proliferation?

(Ms. Ghose, India)

Our assessment about the agenda of nuclear-weapon States is borne out by other related developments. With the end of the cold war, there is talk of new doctrines and targeting strategies being developed for nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are attracting consideration for use against chemical or biological attack, or in a sub-strategic role. A doctrine has been developed that nuclear weapons are required as a precaution against future errant behaviour and threat from unspecified States. The space window of the nuclear arms race has not been closed. To perpetuate retention, doctrines for naval deployment are being developed. To open up future possibilities, programmes for anti-ballistic missiles are being actively pursued.

Nuclear testing which has been carried out even as our negotiations proceeded has been justified as essential for national security and for permitting completion of work on new designs and gathering of data to enable computer simulation and modelling to preserve and refine capabilities into the distant future. We see that vast amounts of resources, both human and material, continue to be devoted to competitive nuclear-weapons-related research and development. The submissions by some nuclear-weapon States to the International Court of Justice are further evidence that they are loath to relinquish their monopoly and regard nuclear weapons as integral to their military strategy. The CTBT that we see emerging appears to be shaped more by the technological preferences of the nuclear-weapon States rather than the imperatives of nuclear disarmament. This was not the CTBT that India envisaged in 1954. This cannot be the CTBT that India can be expected to accept.

India remains convinced that complete elimination of nuclear weapons will enhance global security. Experience tells us that such an objective cannot be achieved in an ad hoc and discriminatory manner. Clandestine transfers of nuclear-weapon technology, a phenomenon which has caused us concern also in our region, attests to the necessity of pursuing the objective of elimination of nuclear weapons in the concrete manner proposed by India. Collectively, we have followed such a route for dealing with other weapons of mass destruction - chemical and biological weapons. And we all believe that the world is a safer and better place with these treaties. Yet, there is opposition when it comes to elimination of nuclear weapons. This inconsistency in approach can only be explained by the desire to retain a monopoly, a desire which is sought to be furthered by the CTBT. We cannot accept that it is legitimate for some countries to rely on nuclear weapons for their security while denying this right to others.

Under such circumstances, it is natural that our national security considerations become a key factor in our decision-making. Our capability is demonstrated but, as a matter of policy, we exercise restraint. Countries around us continue their weapon programmes, either openly or in a clandestine manner. In such an environment, India cannot accept any restraints on its capability if other countries remain unwilling to accept the obligation to eliminate their nuclear weapons.

India has demonstrated its resolve in the past. We have refused to accede to the discriminatory order of today's international nuclear regime. This policy has been maintained, despite pressures of one sort or another.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

The same conviction is reflected in our stand on the CTBT. Last year, we expressed our dismay at the indefinite extension of the NPT because, in our view, it sought to legitimize the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by five countries. Today, the right to continue development and refinement of their arsenals is being sought to be legitimized through another flawed and eternal treaty. Such a treaty is not conceived as a measure towards universal nuclear disarmament and is not in India's national security interest. India, therefore, cannot subscribe to it in its present form.

As you are aware, among the conditions put forward for the CTBT to enter into force, there are suggestions that ratification by India among others, will be a requirement. Let me make this quite clear: we would not accept any language in the treaty text which would affect our sovereign right to decide, in the light of our supreme national interest, whether we should or should not accede to such a treaty.

India's commitment to the cause of global nuclear disarmament remains unaltered. We have always been in the forefront of the quest for world peace. This effort will continue. The experience of these negotiations strengthens our resolve that nuclear disarmament needs to be pursued resolutely in a comprehensive manner, for only then will it contribute to global security, the security of all States alike and security of children all over the world. This has been a central tenet of our national security policy as reflected in our foreign policy and in our nuclear policy. We are confident that future developments will demonstrate the validity of this approach.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Siraj.

Mr. SIRAJ (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference at this crucial phase of the Conference's deliberations and your presiding over the successful admittance of the Group of 23 States as full members of the CD. My delegation has full confidence that you will steer our task to the expected fruitful conclusion. I also pay tribute to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria, whose guidance and able stewardship enabled the conference to achieve greater progress.

At this plenary session I wish to address the issue of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. First of all, we take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the 23 States which were successfully admitted as members of the CD effective last Monday, 17 June 1996.

Allow me to bring this plenary's attention to Malaysia's case. Malaysia has been participating as an observer for some time now. We submitted our application for membership to the Conference on 3 September 1993. While the situation for the 23 States is now resolved, and we are pleased that this is now so, we do of course have a little human touch of envy. Malaysia believes, as do many others, that the issue of expansion of CD membership should not end

(Mr. Siraj, Malaysia)

here. The applications made by us and the other 12 States now merit your immediate attention and should not be disregarded or neglected by this august body. We urge you not to forget your friends.

We are seeking membership not merely for the sake of membership or because it is fashionable to do so, but rather we have been following the CD with great interest and would like to be able to contribute in a meaningful way in the future. Malaysia is of the view that membership of the CD should be enlarged further to make this forum more representative of the international community. Participating from the back row of the Conference (although not literally today) is not the wish of any sovereign State. International security issues affect all States on this planet Earth, and thus all genuinely interested States should be allowed to participate on an equal basis. But understandably, for practical reasons and to ensure that the CD remains effective, we concur with the view that there should be a limit to the number.

In this regard we urge that the CD address the issue of expansion of its membership, particularly on the issue of the application by Malaysia and the other 12 States, as a matter of priority. For this purpose you may wish to consider appointing a Friend of the Chair or Friends of the Chair, or a special coordinator, to address the issue and to report to you at the earliest possible time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vattani.

Mr. VATTANI (Italy): Mr. President, let me first express to you my heartfelt congratulations and admiration for the wisdom, firmness and leadership which you demonstrate every day in performing the role of President of the Conference on Disarmament in such a historic moment in the history of this forum.

Italy expresses its satisfaction for the decision taken on 17 June by the Conference on Disarmament to admit new members, some of which are members of the European Union.

Although the Conference on Disarmament has now admitted 23 States, 13 further applications for membership are still to be considered, including those of 4 European Union members, some of which were submitted over a decade ago.

It has always been the European's Union's objective that all States which have applied for CD membership to date should be admitted, including the EU member States.

Recalling that decision CD/1356 explicitly states that this enlargement is "without prejudice to the consideration of the other candidatures to date" and that United Nations resolution 50/72 C urged the Conference to give further consideration, at its 1996 session, to these remaining candidatures following the presentation of a progress report by the President of the CD,

(Mr. Vattani, Italy)

Italy believes that the CD plenary should consider the remaining candidatures for CD membership before the end of its 1996 session with a view to taking an early decision on their admission to full membership.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Disarmament is, in the last analysis, a question of confidence. Confidence-building, however, requires transparency and participation. Translated into institutional terms, this means that each and every country willing to contribute in a constructive manner to the common cause of disarmament in all its different forms needs to be able to interact on an equal footing within the Conference on Disarmament. As has been stated on so many occasions, in today's world disarmament is one of the most pressing concerns, and it is a global concern. Therefore, the composition of this Conference had become a true anachronism. We are glad that, with the decision taken, we have partially remedied this unsatisfactory situation. We trust that further steps towards universality of membership will follow. In expressing our appreciation that my country has finally, namely 14 years after having submitted its application, been accepted as a full member of this important forum of international negotiation, I should like to state that Austria sees its new membership status as particularly appropriate in the light of our potential host country role for one of the most important disarmament organizations.

Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on the fact that, under your very able guidance, we have succeeded in finding a solution to one of the most daunting and frustrating chapters in the history of the CD. I would like to pay tribute to you personally and to all those who have contributed to this happy outcome, most particularly the spokesman of the G.23, Ambassador Berguño, Ambassador Selebi from South Africa, who developed a personal initiative which was vital to finding the solution, Ambassador Sánchez Arnau from Argentina, who presented the draft decision to the Conference, and finally all those in other groups who were willing and able to arrange for a successful outcome of this process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and his kind words. I give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Anderson.

Mrs. ANDERSON (Ireland): You will not be surprised that the Irish delegation witnessed this week's decision on enlargement with mixed feelings. We are genuinely pleased for the 23 new members. These are delegations of talent and commitment who will make an even greater contribution as members than they have as observers. Their admission will bring a breath of fresh air into this tightly knit community. We join in celebrating the sense of change and renewal that accompanies this decision. But certain questions are unavoidable. There are values of transparency and equity that we all share: were they adequately reflected in the process that led to this decision? Does the selectivity of the 1993 list become any more acceptable in 1996? Is no explanation owed to a country such as my own, whose application for membership

(Mrs. Anderson, Ireland)

is now of 14 years' standing? And of course there are questions that are absolutely critical at this stage: Where do we go from here? How can we build on the logic and momentum of this decision?

There are obvious textual points of reference. As the Italian Ambassador has just reminded us, decision CD/1356 clearly states that it is without prejudice to the remaining candidatures. It also states that the Conference will review the situation regarding expansion following the presentation of progress reports by the President at the end of each part of its annual session. The then President of the Conference was quite explicit that this reference applied both to States on the O'Sullivan list and to other applicants. We believe, therefore, that there is a continuing obligation on the President of the Conference to report at the end of each part session; we look forward to the next such report. United Nations resolution 50/72 C is also relevant. In urging the Conference to consider the remaining candidatures before the end of the 1996 session, it sets a time-frame for our further deliberations.

However, I would prefer not to base my intervention today on textual references. I would prefer instead to appeal to a wider and more generous spirit within this body. The decision to admit the G.23 is a decision to open up, to modernize, to bring the Conference into line with the post-cold-war world. That inclusionary instinct will surely continue to propel the process forward. It could not be right, having gone so far, to pull up the drawbridge now. We are greatly encouraged by the support for further expansion expressed by many delegations. We will work with members and with all other applicants to make that a reality as soon as possible. In your consultations, Mr. President, you will no doubt receive a number of procedural suggestions as to how the remaining applications are best dealt with. The proposals may differ, but we believe they will be inspired by a common purpose: to achieve results and to achieve them quickly. With concentrated effort, we are confident that a consensus approach is within reach.

I conclude with the congratulations I voiced at the outset. The G.23 have worked long and hard and have earned their achievement. We wish them well in their new role.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Greece, Ambassador Helmis.

Mr. HELMIS (Greece): Mr. President, since it is the first time that I take the floor, I would like to congratulate you most warmly on the assumption of the very important and difficult task of President of the CD. I trust that under your experienced guidance, the current negotiation of the CTBT will be finalized successfully by the end of this month.

I should like to note with satisfaction that this august assembly decided last Monday to implement last year's decision for the enlargement of the CD by 23 new member States. I believe that these new member States will take part in the Conference in a constructive and productive way, thus contributing to the promotion of the goals of the CD, which constitutes, as we all know, a

(Mr. Helmis, Greece)

negotiating forum of unique importance as regards the elaboration of international instruments in the field of disarmament. I therefore express my warm congratulations to all 23 new member States, wishing them every success in their new responsibilities.

Referring to the issue of the geographical enlargement of the CD, I would like to underline that my country considers the accession of the 23 States as a step in the right direction, which should be followed by the early accession of the remaining 13 candidates. This last accession will undoubtedly render the Conference more representative and its decisions respected to a greater extent worldwide. I fully share the views expressed in the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Alessandro Vattani. I also associate myself with the remarks made by other speakers who supported the further enlargement of the Conference and, in particular, with the observations of the delegation of Finland, which made last Monday a very constructive proposal relating to the nomination of a special coordinator on the remaining applications. I expect, Mr. President, that in parallel with the other important tasks of your presidency, you will promote a rapid and effective dialogue with all applicant States.

May I now seize this opportunity to say a few words on the very important issue of the CTBT? First of all, I should recall that my country is a non-nuclear-weapon State situated in a very sensitive region, the Balkan peninsula, which greatly suffered during the cold war era as a result of the division of Europe. Greece has a long history of full respect for all the rules and principles of international law, in line with its firm stance aiming at the preservation of peace and security throughout the world. As regards the CTBT in particular, the Greek Government and its people are strongly in favour of putting an end to all nuclear tests. We believe that the early implementation of the CTBT will bring about more cooperation and confidence among States and people and will facilitate the elimination in the future of all nuclear arms, an endeavour which should constitute one of the most important goals of the international community.

In the light of the above, my country supports, as I have already mentioned, the successful finalization of the CTBT negotiations by the end of this month, and considers the proposed draft as a positive one, because it introduces the zero-yield option as well as an effective and well-organized monitoring system, respecting national sovereignty, and ensuring efficiency and objectivity.

I am particularly happy to confirm that the Greek Government has promptly decided to put the Anogia auxiliary station under the umbrella of the CTBT monitoring system. We fully support the signing of the treaty by the end of this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Greece for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with all those who have paid tribute to you on the work that you are carrying out as President of the Conference and congratulate you on the decision which has just been taken on expansion. As you know, we greatly appreciate your diplomatic skills and everything you have been doing, not just in the context of the CD, but also in other international institutions. I would not like to take much time. I think that with more than 60 members we ought perhaps to speak less if we want to finish in time. So I would simply venture to make two or three comments today, which relate to the expansion of the Conference and the decision that has been taken.

First and foremost I would like to associate myself with what was said by the Coordinator of the Group of 21 in congratulating the new members and bidding them welcome among us. I read most attentively the letter from the 23 new members, which has been distributed to us as document CD/1407. As I had occasion to say before we had the letter to hand, I would simply like to say, for clarity's sake, because I think there are some delegations which have not properly understood Morocco's position, that we don't understand at all what the reference to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter has to do with disarmament issues, and I will make my point very clear.

I have re-read the Charter, and more particularly Chapter VII, very carefully. So, when you want to impose sanctions on a country, you have to go to the Security Council, which adopts these sanctions. That applies to two countries, one of which is among us here. I read the Security Council resolution which lists the various sanctions and I did not find - I knew this, but I have rechecked the terms of the resolution, which I think is 661 (1990), to find a provision which says that a country cannot be a member of the CD or that it cannot exercise its voting rights, with all the consequences that implies. What still surprises me now is that we are obliged to mention Chapter VII in letter CD/1407. The is an erroneous interpretation of Chapter VII and of the Security Council resolutions, because the resolution instituting sanctions against that country says nothing about that. In fact, there has been an interpretation of texts which legally doesn't hold water.

I would like to say that the Conference on Disarmament, since it operates by consensus, does not endorse - to say the least - the interpretation contained in document CD/1407, and that is why when I read paragraph 4 of the letter, which says: "This commitment shall cease to apply if there is a consensus decision in the Conference on Disarmament that the circumstance which had given rise to the situation requiring this solemn commitment no longer exists", I do not understand it because there is no circumstance. If it is a political circumstance, maybe, if it is a legal circumstance, it doesn't exist because we don't recognize it as Morocco and if Morocco doesn't recognize it, then the Conference doesn't recognize it either, by virtue of the consensus rule. So I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, as far as we are concerned, speaking as the Moroccan delegation, this paragraph means nothing, because a country subject to Chapter VII has the right, in our view, to do what it wants, except what is prohibited in the Security Council resolution referring to it. Now, the Security Council resolution referring to that country which is among us says nothing about the

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

Conference on Disarmament, nor about voting rights in the Conference on Disarmament. So that's established. That was my first comment, and I would not like to take up much time and spoil this very pleasant atmosphere with the new members among us.

My second comment is much more positive, because it refers to the other candidates for membership of the Conference on Disarmament. Last September we had adopted the first stage of this historic decision today, and I confirm what the Ambassador of Ireland said on this subject. I was at the time the President of the Conference - I consulted everybody including the 23 and the 13 other countries which had applied to join at that point. I think that indeed the understanding we had was that the admission of the 23 was a first stage. Now we have to go beyond the 23 and I am not going to insult you by reading you what I said at the end of my term, but I think it very clearly followed the lines of what many speakers have said today, that we must, as soon as possible, examine the other applications and any others that may come in the meantime. I fully support any sort of machinery to study the new applications. I think we have talked about a Friend of the Chair or a special coordinator, or else the President himself could do the job. I have no particular preference, but I do emphasize, as I did when I was President, that this question must be considered as quickly as possible. The applicants in question have aspirations that are legitimate. The only limit, of course, and I think that the Group of 21 has a fairly clear position, is that we cannot accept an open-ended Conference, otherwise it will become a debating body which would jeopardize the negotiations conducted in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole negotiating forum is the field of disarmament.

My third comment is one I hesitated to make but one which, now that we have new members, I would describe as a comment made in an ecumenical spirit. I said to myself that we have to develop understanding among us now that there are more of us and I think that during the fairly lively debate in the previous meetings we have referred to concepts which I would like to clarify. I am going to quote a verse of Arabic poetry which contains a principle that is fully respected by all Muslims, and, as current President of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I know what I am talking about. I hope that this will be translated correctly: "Kada al-mu'allimu an yakouna rasoulan". I will try to paraphrase: in Islam, we believe that any senior or junior schoolmaster, secondary teacher or university professor, regardless of his qualifications or the extent of his talents, is someone who merits respect, since he could have been a prophet. I would simply say, to borrow from another culture, in the words the French would use, à bon entendeur, salut (a word to the wise is enough).

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Morocco for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Caballero.

Mr. CABALLERO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Cuba, I would like to express our most sincere gratitude to you for the work you have been doing as President of the Conference on Disarmament. The historic step that we have taken in expanding this forum

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

shows your skills as a diplomat and your sincere desire to foster the cause of disarmament. Our gratitude also to your predecessor, Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria, and to those other ambassadors and delegations who, both in the past and in the present, have contributed through their tenacious efforts to the solution of this issue and the expansion of the CD. There is no doubt that with an expanded CD there will be better representation of the interests of the international community and the agreements which we negotiate in it will be more solidly based, not only because of the increase in the number of members of the Conference but as a result of the incorporation we have witnessed of countries which together with us wish to contribute to the cause of peace. That said, we wish to bid a warm welcome in the CD to the 23 new members who joined us on 17 June, in accordance with decision CD/1406 of this body. In Cuba they will be able to secure cooperation in achieving the aims which we share.

We have received the letter which, in the exercise of their national sovereignty, the 23 new member States of the CD sent to you. We consider the above-mentioned text to be precisely that: an exercise of national sovereignty which no one may call into question but whose effect is limited to the signatories. We are all aware of the prime responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. That responsibility is clear in the United Nations Charter and its application cannot be linked to issues which have nothing to do with its mandate. For these reasons, the reference made in the document sent to you by the 23 new members to measures taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter can in no way be linked to this or any other multilateral forum, nor could anybody seek to use it as a precedent in the future.

For Cuba, this reference to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter can only be accepted in the context in which it has been interpreted. We wish to place that on record in the proceedings of this Conference and before international public opinion. Our position has always been in favour of the expansion of this Conference on the terms laid down in 1993 and it is thus that we interpret what has recently been accomplished, that is, a clean, completely unconditional decision. However, we cannot but profoundly regret the fact that because of the overweening intransigence shown by the United States of America with respect to one of the 23 new member States the solution of the expansion of the Conference took such a long time. This, too, should go down in the records of this tortuous process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have the pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Armstrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): Mr. President, New Zealand wishes to congratulate you and the Conference for the decision taken on 17 June to expand its membership. With this decision the Conference has delivered on the commitment made last September to New Zealand and the 22 countries who join us as new members. It has also shown to the international community good faith in answering the call made on it at the last three General Assemblies to expand its membership without delay.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

Thanks are due to all those who helped to secure this achievement and especially Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia for his important role in 1993, Ambassador Lampreia of Brazil, as Friend of the Chair, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, who presided over CD/1356, and to several other CD Presidents who laid the groundwork for this decision. It was the professional dedication displayed by you, Mr. President, and by the sponsor of the decision, Ambassador Sánchez Arnau of Argentina, which delivered the decision. Our thanks also go to the other Group coordinators and China.

I also wish to pay tribute to the countries which were once known as the G-23. We have worked together with a common purpose and good will which should inspire our future work together. We thank our G-23 colleagues for keeping faith with a common goal and, in particular, express our appreciation to Ambassador Berguño of Chile, our Coordinator, and to Ambassador Selebi of South Africa for the major role his country played in this effort.

Looking to the future, New Zealand considers that the composition of this Conference should remain representative of the international community through regular review and consideration of those applications for membership which remain outstanding.

Since many others are waiting to speak, I conclude by assuring you, your successors as CD President, the Secretary-General of the Conference and all CD members of New Zealand's commitment to the achievement of the positive results which the international community requires from its single negotiating body for arms control and disarmament.

Mr. KIERULF (Denmark): Since this is the first time I address the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, most sincerely on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to extend its congratulations to the new member States which were admitted on 17 June as new members of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made earlier this morning by the distinguished representative of Italy, President in office of the Council of the European Union. So I shall be brief. My delegation wished, this morning, to point out that my country has been an observer to the CD for many years and my delegation would like to take this opportunity to confirm Denmark's commitment to disarmament and arms control. Being among the remaining applicants for membership of the Conference, my delegation wishes to reiterate Denmark's keen interest in becoming a member State of the Conference at the earliest possible date. In our view, all States having applied for membership of the Conference should be admitted. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/72 C, my delegation requests that our candidature be further considered by the Conference during this year's session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Denmark for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, this is the first time I speak under your presidency. So I use the occasion to congratulate you warmly and extend to you my fullest support. With your vast knowledge and experience, we are assured of stewardship at optimum levels. I should also pay tribute to your predecessor Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria and welcome Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia who has recently joined us and his contribution to our work.

I wish as well to welcome, once again, the new members to the Conference and reiterate that the process of expansion does not end here and membership for others who have, for the time being, remained on the sidelines should be pursued effectively.

We are at the final stage of negotiating at the CTBT; an extremely critical stage as the fate of the treaty may depend on the success of this last phase of negotiations. If the deadline of 28 June is strict, which we hope it is, only a few working days remain at hand. Yet a number of significant issues which are essentially of a political nature are unresolved. These issues cover a wide range of areas such as scope, verification and OSI, EIF and the Executive Council, issues which constitute, in essence, the main body of the treaty. If we still do not know the nature of the treaty and what exactly it is that the treaty is banning, how to define basic aspects of its verification system, what could trigger an on-site inspection - how it should be carried out and what should be done with its outcome, what criteria need to be taken into account in electing the members to the most important decision-making institution of the treaty and in which manner the treaty should come into force, we can conclude that we still do not have a treaty.

I do not intend to underestimate the immense and valuable work that has been carried out so far. What needs to be underlined, however, is that great advances in technical discussions which have paved the way for agreement in many of these areas have not been matched with progress on the more fundamental issues which require decisions at the political macro level. This progress is in absolute need now. It is a need today as tomorrow may prove to be too late. For our part, therefore, I shall attempt to stress, in brief, what we consider essential, the bottom line so to speak, in attempting negotiations towards a compromise on some of the more significant issues.

For more than 40 years the international community has been pressing for a ban on all nuclear tests. A ban that is not an end in itself but a means to achieve nuclear disarmament. The ban must also be comprehensive in its true sense. A treaty that does not prohibit nuclear tests, does not end qualitative development of nuclear weapons and allows the nuclear Powers to pursue their programmes to improve their nuclear weapons through simulations as well as subcritical tests is not comprehensive; and when, furthermore, the treaty is not placed in its appropriate nuclear disarmament context it loses its meaning. Regrettably the trend seems to be towards compromising on these essential points.

We, of course, are examining these issues with a realistic view. We are seeking a solution even though that may require major compromises on our side. It is in this light that we believe the scope as presented now may be

(Mr. Nasseri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

considered if, as a minimum, clear and specific commitments are included in the preamble and the object and purpose of the treaty to: nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework, and to terminate the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. We need also, in this context, to witness real good faith at the CD to establish the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

On general aspects of verification, we should reiterate that consideration of national technical means as a source to trigger on-site inspection can lead to a precedence with serious legal and political implications. I stress firmly that this cannot be acceptable. The IMS has broad and extensive coverage which rules out the need for NTMs. It has been argued, however, that subcritical tests under one kiloton, which will go undetected by the IMS, can still be sufficient to provide the possibility for qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. This is a matter of concern for us too. In considering this shortcoming, though, we need to take into account that the insistence to limit the scope of the treaty to ban only test explosions and not all nuclear tests entails a much greater loophole and leads to a non-comprehensive test-ban treaty; the IMS apparently is not capable of detecting nuclear-test explosions of even higher magnitude in certain geographical areas closer to nuclear-weapon States. Hence, the system is more vulnerable in detecting test explosions by nuclear-weapon States than those of others.

We have witnessed that for the big Powers national security objectives consistently prevail over international concern. It is, therefore, hard to perceive that NTMs may be applied in an objective, impartial and non-discriminatory manner. The introduction of the NTMs may therefore be considered, provisionally and as a complementary source of information, within a context that brings it under international scrutiny.

Regarding the Executive Council, I need to emphasize that any notion of permanency for those who have acquired nuclear weapons or nuclear capabilities relevant to the treaty is unacceptable. It is only a prerogative for the regional groups to determine whether they wish to renew membership of nay State party in the Council. It is possible to consider criteria for qualifications on membership. But to tie any fixed proportion to any criteria is tantamount to permanency and cannot be accepted. Moreover, the composition of the regions should correspond to existing arrangements in other international bodies.

On EIF, we hope that the recent decision to expand membership of the CD could pave the way for possible acceptable solutions. We do understand, however, that this may be one of the last issues to be finalized.

Remaining technical issues on IMS and OSI are being discussed seriously and are moving forward, albeit slowly. It seems, however, that they will not be fully resolved until the more major political issues have been settled.

To resolve these and other issues in the course of the few remaining days requires determination and will by all the members and a readiness to engage in real negotiations. Now that the Chairman is taking full charge of negotiations it is extremely important to make arrangements for focused,

(Mr. Nasseri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

extensive, continuous and transparent negotiations involving particularly those who have specific positions on issues and those who can contribute in bridging positions while open to all other interested members.

We should prepare ourselves to work extra hours and to spare no effort towards conclusion of the treaty before the designated deadline. I stress once again the readiness of my delegation to extend the fullest cooperation to the Chairman and to you, Mr. President, at this critical juncture.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico wishes to express its satisfaction at the decision to enlarge the membership of the Conference unconditionally that we adopted at the last plenary, and we most cordially welcome the 23 States which join our work today, and which with their presence make this Conference on Disarmament more representative of the international community. After the adoption of the decision to enlarge the membership of the Conference, we took note of the letter that the new members addressed to the President of the Conference. The Conference on Disarmament was not asked to enlarge, change or reduce the scope of coercive measures adopted by the Security Council in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, nor could the delegation of Mexico have taken part in any such decision of the Conference.

Last 18 March saw the end of the consultations which, as moderator on the topic of entry into force, I carried out within the context of the Ad Hoc Committee on the nuclear-test-ban treaty, and I gave the result of these consultations to the Committee Chairman. As everyone is aware, agreement has yet to be reached among delegations on the requirements for the entry into force of the treaty. Differences remain between those delegations that would like the only requirement to be a simple number ratifications and those others that call for a number of specific ratifying States. Differences also remain between delegations that could agree to the requirement of a number of specific ratifying States provided that the treaty provides for a mechanism to ensure entry into force after some years and delegations which do not think that such a mechanism is necessary.

I have to tell the Conference that as moderator I have received many communications from non-governmental organizations concerned that an approach which requires specific ratifying States for entry into force would lead to an excessive delay in the entry into force of the treaty and would even make it conditional upon the will of a few States or a single State. Such a single State could delay entry into force because of circumstances completely foreign to the subject-matter of the treaty. Excessive delay in entry into force would increase the possibility that the moratoriums would be lifted and nuclear-weapon explosions resumed to the detriment of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Finally, the non-governmental organizations that have written to me point out that requiring ratifications by specific States is discriminatory since all that is taken into consideration is the concerns of a few States at the expense of the expectations of the majority. The

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

organizations to which I am referring include: Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Arms Control Association, Federation of American Scientists, Union of Concerned Scientists, Council for a Liveable World, Women's Action for a New Direction, Institute for Science and International Studies, Twenty-Twenty Vision Project, Lawyers' Alliance for World Security and so on and so forth.

As moderator I was debarred from expressing my delegation's point of view. Today I wish to state for the record that the Government of Mexico fully shares the concern of the non-governmental organizations and is in favour of a provision for entry into force that endows the treaty with credibility. A requirement for a great many specific ratifying States would tend to go hand in hand with a waiver clause in order to offer some glimmer of hope that the treaty could enter into force in a reasonable interval. In the consultations that the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee is to carry out on this point, the delegation of Mexico will argue in favour of credibility for the treaty, emphasizing and supporting the reasoning adduced by civil society.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): I have asked for the floor to bid welcome to the new members of the Conference on Disarmament and to make a few comments on the letter which they have addressed to you, Mr. President. This letter has been distributed as a CD working paper with the symbol CD/1407, dated 17 June 1996.

My delegation has always supported the principle of the expansion of the CD in accordance with rule 2 of the rules of procedure. Ambassador O'Sullivan - to whom our thoughts cannot fail to turn today - managed to find a formula which we supported because it seemed to us to meet the criterion of political and geographical balance which must prevail in this forum. Back in 1993 we were already calling for the immediate and unconditional admission of the 23 countries concerned on an equal footing. We are delighted that finally they are among us. We welcome them warmly. I can assure them of my delegation's full cooperation. As we have always said, the expansion of the membership of the CD had become a necessity. This is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, and, as such, it has to represent all shades of opinion in the international community and all the geographical regions of the world. We know that other countries have applied for membership of the CD. We cannot ignore them. However, we also know that many member States are concerned to maintain the political and geographical balance which must characterize the composition of the Conference. That concern will have to be borne in mind. There is also the question of the kind of CD we wish to have. Should it remain a negotiating body or become a body for debate? Should we appoint a special coordinator whose task it would be to consider all these aspects? I wish to make it clear that I am just raising this question - I am not tabling it, at least for the time being.

We have just received document CD/1407, containing the letter which was sent to you, Sir, by the 23 members following the adoption of decision CD/1406 on the expansion of the membership of the Conference. We cannot but make a few comments on this document. I must immediately make it clear that my delegation does not have and has never had any intention of commenting on the actual act, because this was an action taken by member States of the

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

international community exercising their sovereign right. We are too jealous of our independence and sovereignty to allow ourselves to attack those of others. So our comments will address the content of the letter and should in no case be taken as a criticism of the decision to expand the membership of the CD, a decision which we have fully endorsed.

In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize that it does not acknowledge the existence of any link between the decision adopted by the Conference and the letter in question. The letter is binding only on its authors. It refers to outside elements which should not and must not be put before the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that in no case can this constitute a precedent which could be cited in other situations, wherever they might arise. In this forum, and as far as we are concerned, all members are full members. They are fully-fledged members by virtue of the principle of sovereign equality of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter in several of its Articles, more specifically in Article 2, paragraph 1. It is true that the search for the compromises that we need to find sometimes leads us to act in such a way that our conception of equality bears the imprint of reality. But this can never be equated with resignation or signify the abandonment of a fundamental tenet of the United Nations system. Allow me before concluding on this point to remind you that other instruments of universal scope enshrine the principle of legal equality among States. We would refer inter alia to the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation between States, which clearly mentions that sovereign equality implies inter alia that the political independence of the State is inviolable.

Before I conclude this hastily improvised statement I would like to say a few words on our essential concern of the moment - the CTBT. We remain attached to the date of 28 June 1996 for the completion of the negotiations. That is why we greatly regret the time which was wasted during the first part of the session and, in particular, during this second part. Since Saturday, 15 June, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee has embarked on intensive negotiations with the approval of the member States of the Conference. We hope that these consultations and negotiations will at least be transparent. We are eagerly and hopefully awaiting the results of these negotiations, which we shall immediately forward to our Government. My delegation would like to recall that it has expressed a number of concerns in public and in private. It is very keen that they should be taken into consideration. The nature of the treaty is of prime importance to us. The CTBT must be an instrument for non-proliferation and disarmament. The composition of the Executive Council has to reflect a truly equitable geographical distribution, because we think that this important body needs to be both technical and political. As to entry into force, it should in no case provide an opportunity to create a new group of States. This would be tantamount to introducing an element of discrimination which my delegation could not accept.

Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia) (translated from French): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time in this Conference under your leadership, allow me first of all to congratulate you warmly on behalf of my delegation on taking up the Chair of this Conference and to pay tribute to the efforts that

(Mr. Ennaceur, Tunisia)

you and your predecessors have made to bring to fruition, after three years of arduous negotiations, the important decision, which some have dubbed historic, concerning the admission of 23 new members to the Conference. I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the new members warmly, persuaded as I am that their future participation in the work of this Conference will be fruitful and a source of enrichment. We should have liked to have a more comprehensive, less selective decision that would have enabled all the States that had applied for membership to be admitted to the Conference. Allow me to remind you in this regard that in the context of the expansion of the membership of the Conference, Tunisia was among the first countries to lodge an application, which proves that Tunisia manifested its interest in this multilateral body at an early stage. My country has always supported expanding the membership of the Conference in a way that would open it to all countries that have applied for admission. We hope that this request, which ties up with those of its partners in the Group of 13, can promptly be met in accordance with the principle of universality of the United Nations. The delegation of Tunisia was alive to the statements made at the previous plenary meeting by His Excellency Mounir Zahran, Ambassador of Egypt, and today by several colleagues, who advocated the application of the aforesaid admission decision to the 13 outstanding candidates, including Tunisia. We also support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Finland to appoint a special coordinator to study the case of these countries. This proposal has been further supported today by several colleagues. We hope that the creation of this post of special coordinator will make it possible to complete the process of expanding the membership of the Conference with the requisite fairness and speed.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Tunisia for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Khoury.

Mr. KHOURY (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Since our delegation is taking the floor for the first time, Mr. President, we would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and we hope that, under your wise guidance and by virtue of your wealth of experience, the Conference will live up to the hopes placed in it by the peoples of the world. We would also like to express our gratitude to you and to all the members of the Conference, for supporting the commendable decision to accept the Syrian Arab Republic as a full member of the Conference. We also extend our thanks to all those who have helped to achieve this result, including, most recently, the Coordinator of the Group of 23, His Excellency the Ambassador of Chile, whom we thank for his untiring efforts.

Expansion of membership will make this important international forum a more democratic institution, since it will reflect the viewpoints of a larger number of members of the international community. Our admission to the Conference will enable us to contribute more effectively to the fulfilment of the aspirations of mankind in the field of disarmament, in particular the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and this will help to allay tensions in many parts of the world and to eliminate hegemony and the policies of aggression on the part of some States which rely on a policy of military

(Mr. Khoury, Syrian Arab Republic)

supremacy. It will also help to achieve peace, stability and security in the world in general and in regions of tension in particular. Our delegation took part in the drafting of the letter submitted to Your Excellency, which was distributed as official document CD/1407 of 17 June 1996. In fact, we were the last State to approve that letter because we had a number of reservations and objections. We finally accepted it in order not to oppose the consensus that had been reached in the Group of 23, although we felt that the letter should in no way constitute a precedent. Finally, our delegation would like to affirm that under your direction, Sir, we will cooperate with the other members of the Conference in order to achieve constructive and acceptable results.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Abuah.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): Mr. President, I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate you on the way you have conducted the affairs of the Conference on Disarmament since you assumed its presidency. After years of difficult negotiations, the Conference has at last admitted into full membership the 23 States in fulfilment of the decision contained in document CD/1356. We pledge our cooperation with the 23 States and look forward to working with them in our joint endeavour to promote international security through disarmament.

We do not question the right of any State to exercise its sovereignty. It is our understanding, in this regard, that there is no restriction on the enjoyment of full membership by the 23 States. As far as we know, the Conference on Disarmament has not imposed any other obligations on the 23 States beyond those undertaken by all its members under the rules of procedure. Nigeria, of course, does not recognise any other constraint.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Hashim.

Mr. HASHIM (Bangladesh): Mr. President, as the Bangladesh delegation takes its seat in this, the first regular plenary since our becoming a full member of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to put on record our deep satisfaction at having you preside over the CD. You assumed the presidency at a significant phase of the Conference - the final stage of the CTBT negotiations. Your presidency has also resolved the long-lingering issue of expansion of the CD. All members of the Conference deserve to be congratulated on having finally waded across the complications that had held up the implementation of decision CD/1356 of 21 September 1995, and thus to enable Bangladesh and the 22 other States on the O'Sullivan list to become members of the CD. My delegation however, feels that the success of the initiative owes much to the manner in which you, as CD President, had conducted the consultations.

(Mr. Hashim, Bangladesh)

My delegation would like to recall with gratitude the efforts made over the years for the expansion of the CD - the efforts that have laid the foundation for the historic decision CD/1406 of 17 June 1996. Ambassador O'Sullivan's contribution to the expansion question signalled perhaps the first significant step in the democratization of this important multilateral body. The long-drawn-out stalemate on the issue of expansion since the O'Sullivan recommendations witnessed a breakthrough on 21 September 1995 with the adoption of decision CD/1356, under the presidency of Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco.

It is our sincere hope that the admission of the 23 would be followed by further expansion, the goal being the universalization of the Conference's negotiation process.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh sets forth the striving for "the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament" as a fundamental principle of State policy. Bangladesh therefore has a constitutional obligation to the objectives of the Conference on Disarmament, which was established as the single multilateral disarmament body of the international community. To Bangladesh, the Decalogue represents, so to speak, its own agenda for disarmament. We sincerely feel that the goals of the CD would be more effectively achieved if the Decalogue were to become, beyond the CD agenda, clear commitments of all national Governments.

The Conference is now left with just a little over a week before the close of this part of the 1996 session. We fervently hope that we would be able to reach final agreement on a CTBT by 28 June. In this my delegation would be forthcoming with its fullest cooperation. Bangladesh feels that a truly comprehensive test ban would be an essential step in our endeavours to achieve total nuclear disarmament. In this, Bangladesh would like to associate itself, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, with the statements made before the Conference in the name of G-21. The true relevance of a CTBT would lie in its ability to go beyond the notion of non-proliferation as in the NPT. As a non-nuclear party to the NPT, we look towards progress first on the issue of vertical proliferation, and beyond that, to nuclear disarmament.

Before I conclude, I would like to record our gratitude for the expressions of welcome made by members of the Conference and to commit the humble capacity of my delegation to work together with all CD members to realise the disarmament goals of the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Mr. Wu.

Mr. WU (China) (translated from Chinese): On 17 June the CD adopted a decision to expand its membership. This is a decision of historic significance. The Chinese delegation would once again like to extend the warmest welcome to the 23 new member States of the CD and would like to join them and the other members of the CD to work for the cause of international disarmament and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

(Mr. Wu, China)

The decision to expand the CD by admitting the 23 new members was made undoubtedly in unique circumstances. The Chinese Government respects the choice of the 23 States for early admission into the CD, because this is an act in exercise of their sovereignty. However, I would like to take this opportunity to state that it is the view of China that the arrangement whereby the 23 States made legally binding commitments in order to be admitted into the CD is entirely a special case. It is only applicable to these 23 States and does not constitute any precedent. Neither does it have any effect on the rules of procedure of the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Portugal, Ambassador de Santa Clara Gomes.

Mr. DE SANTA CLARA GOMES (Portugal): Mr. President, allow me to warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. Your competence and your skill will ensure that success will crown your efforts, as was already proven in the handling of the enlargement of the Conference.

As a member of the European Union, my delegation fully supports the statement made by the head of delegation of Italy, the present President in office of the European Union. But we would like to make one additional comment on this matter. Portugal welcomes the decision on the implementation of the first part of decision CD/1356 and warmly congratulates the new members. In fact, it was universally accepted that the membership of the CD as the sole body of negotiation on disarmament matters, creating juridical instruments of a universal nature, did not reflect the fundamental changes in international security that occurred since the end of the cold war. But we think that the Conference should proceed without delay to admit as full members the other countries interested in contributing to the work of the CD.

We therefore consider that the CD, in compliance with its own decision of last year, and with the resolution of the General Assembly also of last year, should give urgent consideration to the remaining 13 candidatures in this year's session. We are convinced that the equilibrium and functionality of the CD will not suffer with the acceptance of the 13 remaining applicants. On the contrary, it is our opinion that these new members, when admitted, will contribute in a positive manner to the effectiveness of this body.

Let me remind the Conference that our interest to participate in this body is of long standing and well justified. Portugal participates with great interest in other forums concerned with disarmament issues and regulation of conflicts in Europe and elsewhere in the world. We have participated in many actions related to disarmament and non-proliferation. As you know, we are expected to contribute to the international monitoring system (IMS) with several monitoring stations. In this context, Portugal feels entitled, and is willing, to give also its contribution in this forum to the creation of instruments that lead to a peaceful world, free of arms. I hope that you, Mr. President, will devote your attention to the solution of this problem.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Portugal for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Norway, Ambassador Skogmo.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): As a senior candidate to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to express my Government's appreciation of the decision of the Conference last Monday to expand the membership of the CD. This was, of course, a long-overdue decision, the result of a process that has, at times, been extremely frustrating to my delegation and to other candidate members.

We have, in previous statements, expressed our appreciation to those officers of the CD who have made particular contributions to advance the process of expanding the membership, among them Ambassador O'Sullivan in 1993 and Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi last December. Today, I would like to express the special gratitude and admiration of my Government to Ambassador Selebi of South Africa and his delegation, who engineered the consultations that led to the decision last Monday. Together with South Africa and the other members of the informal Group of 23, led by Ambassador Berguño of Chile, we have worked hard over the last few months to press for an urgent solution to the question of CD membership. We believe firmly that the decision taken was not only in the interest of the Group of 23, but in the interest of the CD itself.

Norway has made an active contribution to the work of the CD over many years as a non-member, inter alia in the fields of strengthening means and methods for technical verification of disarmament treaties negotiated by the Conference. We have, in statements to the CD, presented our views on the issues before us, including on the CTBT. We now look forward to making an active contribution to the negotiating process of global disarmament issues on the agenda of the Conference.

We would like to put on record our view that the same rights should be accorded to other candidate members of the CD. The decision taken by the Conference on Monday 17 June should only be a step on the road to global membership. Negotiations on global disarmament agreements should, in our view, be fully transparent and open to all countries which are expected to become parties to these agreements. The legitimacy, credibility, relevance and efficiency of the CD would be best served by allowing all countries which seek membership to join the Conference as full and equal members. Norway remains committed to working towards this goal.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I associate myself with all the positive reactions to the agreed expansion. As to the future, I refer to my statement regarding the need to abide by the terms and deadlines of the relevant General Assembly resolution. As a signatory of the letter mentioned in document CD/1407, the wording of which was agreed by the countries that signed it, I must place on record that in my opinion that communication addressed to the President of the Conference does not contain any interpretation of the matters that gave rise to controversy.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

Distinguished delegates, as I mentioned to you at our plenary meeting last Thursday, 13 June, I now intend to put to the Conference for decision the recommendation contained in paragraph 16 of document CD/1398 to the effect that the forty-fifth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events be convened from 5 to 16 August 1996. May I take it that the Conference agrees to this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Since this will be the last plenary over which I will have the honour to preside, let me take this opportunity to make a few brief remarks. The short but intensive four weeks of Pakistan's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament have been both challenging and rewarding. During this month, with the good will of member States and with good fortune, the Conference has been able to realize the long-standing goal of expanding its membership. Through this landmark decision, the Conference is now more representative of international political and strategic realities. An enlarged CD will carry great credibility as it seeks to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. At the same time, we will have to respond soon to the desire of the several other States whose membership applications remain pending.

The challenges before the CD in the immediate future remain important. First, it is called upon to conclude the CTBT by the deadline which we have decided upon - 28 June. Our work in the next few days will have to be intensive, and I hope productive. As President of the Conference, I was also charged with holding consultations on the issue of nuclear disarmament. These consultations, unfortunately, were not conclusive. I am confident that my successor, Ambassador Urrutia of Peru, will continue these consultations. I hope that he will achieve a breakthrough on this important item.

Finally, the Conference on Disarmament will have to evolve an agreement on its future agenda and programme of work. We have received the report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria, on this subject. Consultations on this issue so far have remained tentative. I trust that my successor will be successful also in achieving an agreed solution on this issue so that the CD can remain productively employed as soon as it completes the historic task of concluding the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Ramaker, has asked me to announce that the open-ended Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee will meet at 3 p.m. in room I this afternoon.

(The President)

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings to be held next week. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. The details of the timetable of meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will be given by its Chairman in due course. On that understanding, may I assume it is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday 25 June 1996 at 10 a.m. in room VII.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.